

Yemba language

Yɛmba or **Yemba**, also **Yém̐ba** or **Bamiléké Dschang**, is a major Grassfields language of Cameroon. It was spoken by 300,000 or so people in the West Region ca. 1990.^[2]

Despite originally being a spoken language exclusively, Yemba writing was developed by Maurice Tadadjeu (co-creator of the General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages) and Steven Bird. Their team developed a small Yemba - French Dictionary covering French translations of over 3,000 Yemba words and expressions.^[4] The Yemba alphabet is a subset of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

A machine backwards transformation of the dictionary was performed by independent scientists who created the French translation of Yemba words. The resulting dictionary was extended with French synonyms from the French version of the WordNet database. Furthermore, over 6,000 English, German, Czech, Spanish, Italian and Chinese words and expressions were translated into Yemba. A major outcome of this project is a collaborative online platform for extending Yemba translations and promoting Yemba learning.^[5]

Yemba	
Yɛmba	
Dschang	
Region	Cameroon
Ethnicity	Bamileke
Native speakers	(300,000 or more ^[1] cited 1992) ^[2]
Language family	<div>Niger–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atlantic–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Benue–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Southern Bantoid<ul style="list-style-type: none">Grassfields<ul style="list-style-type: none">Eastern<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bamileke<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bamboutos<ul style="list-style-type: none">Yemba</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	ybb
Glottolog	yemb1246 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/yemb1246) ^[3]

Contents

Phonology
Consonants
Vowels
Tone
References
External links

Phonology

Consonants

		<u>Labial</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
<u>Plosive</u>	voiceless	(p)	t		k	ʔ
	voiced	b	d		g	
<u>Affricate</u>		ɸf	ts	tʃ		
<u>Fricative</u>	voiceless	f	s	ʃ		
	voiced	v	z	ʒ	(ɣ)	
<u>Nasal</u>		m	n		ŋ	
<u>Rhotic</u>			(r)			
<u>Approximant</u>	lateral		(l)			
	central	w		j		

- Sounds /tʃ ʃ ʒ/ are included as phonemes in some analyses. In most analyses, they are considered as allophones of /ts s z/.
- Sounds [p l ɣ] are consonant alternation sounds between the following consonants /b d g/.
- Alternation sounds of /j w/ are labialized and palatalized sounds [g^j g^w].
- Graphemes of the alterations and allophones [tʃ ʃ ʒ p l] are noted in the Yemba alphabet as *c sh j p l*.
- An /r/ sound can also be included in the current language, and written in the Yemba alphabet as *r*.
- The prosodies of palatalization and labialization [j^j w^w], are written orthographically with lowercase graphemes *y w*.
- A grapheme for aspiration [h] among consonants is written as *h*.

Vowels

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Back</u>
<u>High</u>	i	ɤ	u
<u>Mid</u>	e		o
	ɛ		ɔ
<u>Low</u>		a	

- /ɤ/ is included as a phoneme in some analyses. In more abstract analyses, it is considered as a palatalization of /u/.
- Vowel length is distinguished using double vowel sounds (ex. aa [a :])

Tone

Three tones are marked as high [á], mid [ā], or low [à]. Low tones are unmarked when written.^[6]

References

1. Yemba and Ngwe together were 350,000 in 1987. Yemba-Nwe at *Ethnologue* (11th ed., 1988).
2. Yemba language at *Ethnologue* (<https://www.ethnologue.com/13/>) (13th ed., 1996).
3. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Yemba" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/yemb1246>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. Bird, Steven; Maurice, Tadadjeu (1997). *Petit Dictionnaire Yémba - Français* (<http://www ldc.upenn.edu/sb/home/papers/dictionary.pdf>) (PDF). ANACLAC (Association Nationale des Comités de langues du Cameroun).
5. "Yemba.net - Online Dictionaries and Learning Tools for the Yemba Language" (<http://www.yemba.net>). Aleco. 2012-03-13. Retrieved 2012-03-13.
6. Harro, Gretchen; Haynes, Nancy (1991). *Grammar Sketch of Yemba*. Yaoundé: SIL.

Petit dictionnaire Yemba Francais (<ftp://ftp.cis.upenn.edu/pub/sb/papers/dictionary/dictionary.pdf>)

External links

- Aleco Yemba.net - Online Dictionaries and Learning Tools for the Yemba Language (<http://www.yemba.net>)

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